

Inter-Varsity Papers

Evangelical Belief



Inter-Varsity Fellowship of Evangelical Unions

EVANGELICAL BELIEF

THE OFFICIAL INTERPRETATION OF
THE DOCTRINAL BASIS OF THE I.V.F.

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EVANGELICAL BELIEF

INTRODUCTORY

I. The Reason for the Booklet

AS former leaders "go down" and the administrative responsibility falls upon new shoulders in the Evangelical Unions of the various Universities, questions arise from time to time about the I.V.F. Doctrinal Basis, and how it is to be interpreted.

So far as their own constitutions and local government are concerned, the Evangelical Unions are autonomous, and, indeed, the doctrinal bases (printed with their constitutions and on their cards of membership) show a considerable amount of variation. Some of the Scottish Universities prefer a long detailed statement; whilst in the majority of the English Unions the basis is comparatively simple. In practice, however, when questions of interpretation arise, there is a useful general standard to be found in the I.V.F. Doctrinal Basis, which is signed by all the officers of the Central Committees which arrange for the united conferences and other matters of common interest in the Inter-Varsity Fellowship. Those who founded the movement hoped that the Basis would also prove helpful to those who may be responsible for drafting similar doctrinal statements when the constitutions are being drawn up for new Christian Unions.

No brief form of words can be made sufficiently explicit to convey an answer to all questions that

may arise. But each new group of leaders has found it valuable to be provided with a short explanation of the Basis.

II. The Doctrinal Basis

(Reprinted from the Constitution)

The Fellowship has for its purpose:—"to uphold in the Universities the truths of Christianity, including:

- (a) The divine inspiration and infallibility of Holy Scripture, as originally given, and its supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct.
- (b) The unity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit in the Godhead.
- (c) The universal sinfulness and guilt of human nature since the Fall, rendering man subject to God's wrath and condemnation.
- (d) Redemption from the guilt, penalty and power of sin *only* through the sacrificial death (as our Representative and Substitute) of Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Son of God.
- (e) The Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.
- (f) The necessity of the work of the Holy Spirit to make the Death of Christ effective to the individual sinner, granting him repentance toward God and faith in Jesus Christ.
- (g) The indwelling and work of the Holy Spirit in the Believer.
- (h) The expectation of the Personal return of the Lord Jesus Christ."

III. General Principles

In adopting the above summary, the earlier General Committees of the I.V.F. were in no sense seeking to frame a new creed. They wished to relate their position to the general belief of Christendom and to emphasise certain aspects of universal Evangelical belief which they feel have received all too scant attention in modern Theology.

It must be clearly understood that the lines of interpretation of the Doctrinal Basis here proposed are suggestive only and are not offered as binding judgments in every detail. The various clauses are intended to be consistent with the chief British Confessions of Faith—viz., the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England, and the Westminster Confession, the latter having most deeply influenced the doctrinal position of the majority of British Free Churches. Those who are by the Constitution required to sign the Basis are invited to accept the statements in their plain sense, and to test them by Holy Scripture.

What is written in this booklet will, it is hoped, enable the reader to see more clearly how the Basis has been generally understood in the I.V.F.

EVANGELICAL BELIEF

It should at the outset be clearly recognised that there is such a thing as "The Faith," a body of revealed truth, in which the Christian's personal faith rests, and which is his intellectual and spiritual anchorage.

In so far as the doctrines of this Faith have to do with the Being of God, they necessarily refer to truths which are beyond man's complete comprehension. That is not to say, however, that man cannot obtain a practical working knowledge of such truths and thereby relate them to his own personal experiences and needs. It is the province of Theology to examine them. Theology has well been called the "Queen" of the sciences. But every branch of Science has its own contribution to make to that which is the great subject of theological study—namely, our understanding of God.

The special material with which Theology occupies itself is the record of Divine Revelation. In it are revealed to us those truths which together form "The Faith." The contents of the Bible, however, are far from being set out in the manner of a text-book of Theology, and "The Faith" is not there presented to us in classified form. One branch of theological study (Dogmatic Theology) seeks to formulate the various truths which comprise revealed religion. It aims at systematically codifying the components of "The Faith" and relating them to one another.

It must be remembered that while Theology is a science, it is intimately related to experimental religion and to the art of life. A theology which only informs the intellect, without influencing the will, is dead (see James ii. 26). It has been well said that the undevout astronomer is mad. Much more must madness be attributed to an undevout theologian!

It is not intended to imply that even a complete Christian theology is necessary for personal relationship

with God. But it is a matter of experience that the more biblical doctrines are mentally and spiritually assimilated, the stronger the Christian life will be. Whilst each individual must beware of seeing only one side of truth, which has many facets, it is undoubtedly desirable to formulate from the Scriptures a summary of these beliefs which must be considered vital for an enlightened and vigorous faith.

It is possible to formulate definite scientific principles which govern our thought in relation to the things of God, in a manner similar to that in which other sciences set out their main findings. Among such principles, if the summary is to represent true Evangelical Belief, the following, we submit, must have a place.

I. The Inspiration and Authority of Holy Scripture

[Doctrinal Basis] Clause (a): "*The divine inspiration and infallibility of Holy Scripture, as originally given, and its supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct.*"

We believe that the Bible is the divinely-given and only first-hand testimony to Jesus as the Son of God, Lord, Saviour and sole Head of the Church. We can know Him and apprehend the revelation which He has given only by humble acceptance of the statements of Holy Scripture as interpreted for us by the Holy Spirit.

(i.) "DIVINE INSPIRATION."

In asserting our belief in the Divine Inspiration of Holy Scripture, we imply that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the Word of God, inclusively and uniquely inspired.

We accept the Canon of Scripture as it is defined in the Protestant Confessions. We believe that every portion of the Canon is necessary to the full revelation of the mind of God. The Scriptures are uniquely inspired, in that the nature of the influence of God on the human writers displayed in them is peculiar to these books, and cannot be identified with any lower form of inspiration, such as that which is found in genius or art.

The conviction that the Bible is the Word of God is wrought in the heart of an individual Christian by the Holy Spirit. But this conviction is also justifiable on rational grounds. Further, the inward witness of the Spirit is not something which is independent of Scripture, but is an inward witness to Scripture. Spiritual illumination is ordinarily dependent upon God's written revelation.

We recognise that many elements are included in the media of God's revelation and that sometimes the utterances of mistaken, or even of wicked, men are to be found included in the record. The inspiration in such cases is concerned with the necessity for presenting an accurate record of their sentiments for some necessary purpose, such as warnings to the human race. Also, we acknowledge that the immediate purport of Scripture varies with differing passages. The homely advice of

Proverbs, relating to the conduct of life, differs from the majestic presentations of the character of Christ which are to be found in St. John's Gospel. But the difference lies in the object before the writer or speaker, and both are necessary, if men are sufficiently to apprehend the mind of God. Such a view does not exclude the use of parable or allegory as methods of Divine revelation, but it does exclude theories which resolve history into allegory.

There have been many theories of inspiration, and we must expect difficulties in the attempt to develop so great a theme. We do not consider that a theory of *mechanical* inspiration, in which it is implied that the human writer was no more than the amanuensis, is in accordance with the evidence. It is clear that the whole personality of the individual was employed by the Holy Spirit in revealing His message.

The Bible reveals that the knowledge of its writers concerning many facts was of the kind in which (so far as we know) men's unaided minds were not aware of such details at the time when the books were written, or even, for that matter, for many centuries afterwards. Modern science is a growth of the last three or four hundred years. The Books of the Bible were completed centuries before modern science was known.

The Bible, on the one hand, exhibits superhuman knowledge at a number of points. On the other hand, it exhibits, quite unmistakably, the human characteristics, in vocabulary and style, of its several writers. "Inspiration" is the term used to link these two complementary factors. In employing it

there is the advantage that the word (or its cognates) is used in our translations of the Bible itself (2 Tim. iii. 16, A.V. and R.V.).

Concerning the mode of inspiration, we can know nothing but what is conveyed in the quite general statements on the subject to be found in the Scriptures—*e.g.*, “holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.” Inspiration is not further defined for us. In particular, no adjective is ever associated with the word in the Bible, whether “verbal” or any other. But since inspiration involves the presentation, on the part of the Apostle or Prophet, of the message God intended him to convey, it necessarily covers the use of words. A large part, therefore, of Christian scholarship is properly directed to the endeavour to get back as far as possible to the actual words employed by the writers.

(ii.) “INFALLIBILITY.”

The word “infallible” is not used in the Basis in a *mechanical* sense. It is, for example, not intended to state that a careless or perverse reader of the Scriptures cannot extract a false meaning from it. But we believe that the Scriptures themselves, when interpreted by the Holy Spirit, will guide into all the truth (John xvi. 13). The Bible itself declares that defects of interpretation often lie in man himself, and in the stubborn refusal of the human will to obey the voice of God. “If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God, or whether I speak of Myself” (John vii. 17).

We would urge, therefore, that there is need of

diligent, careful study, and of comparison of Scripture with Scripture. Whilst spiritual things are spiritually discerned, this affords no excuse for intellectual laziness. We must “love the Lord our God” with all our *mind*.

“To abandon the use of reason in matters of revelation is like putting out the eyes in order to use the telescope” (Locke). Mental gifts can never be employed better than in the study of the Scriptures, and full use should be made of the help afforded to their understanding in commentaries and other books which have resulted from the labours of devout scholars in the past.

By using the word “infallibility” in reference to Holy Scripture, we mean that it is in itself a true and sufficient guide, which may be trusted implicitly. Such differences of text or meaning as have arisen in the course of transcription or translation are so insignificant as not to affect the faith or practice of the Christian man.

(iii.) “AS ORIGINALLY GIVEN.”

The oldest extant texts of Scripture are not autograph copies, and in our English versions we have what are, in the case of many books, translations of a translation. But we believe, and this belief has adequate support from scholarship, that God has marvellously ensured the preservation of the general meaning and that we can in almost all passages—particularly those of doctrinal importance—be reasonably sure of the sense of the original. Whilst there may yet be discovered older and more accurate manuscripts, a number at our

disposal are unequivocal and reliable guides. By diligently comparing Scripture with Scripture we may arrive at the knowledge of the counsel of God which is "more sure" than a voice speaking to us from heaven (2 Pet. i. 19).

We believe that the Christian should adopt the same attitude to the texts at our disposal as our Lord did to those of His time.

(iv.) "SUPREME AUTHORITY."

The fact that the Bible is an inspired revelation from God, and of God, gives to it a weight and authority which no other book ever had, or could have. It is concerned with the will of God and man's need. In these matters it speaks imperatively as a direct message from God.

In it physical and historical facts are related to the message of God, and spiritual truths are not dissociated from nature and history. The Bible is not intended to be a scientific treatise on the physical universe, or a complete record of contemporary history. But the Bible has not been proved to be in error on statements of historical or scientific fact. There are no findings, where scientists are fully agreed, which are in conflict with the Bible, and archæological research is continually vindicating biblical statements as fresh evidence comes to light.

The Bible necessarily touches the results of human investigation at several points. For example, history and chronology, cosmology on the one hand; and on the other hand astronomy, geology, geography, topo-

graphy. At all such points of contact the Bible affords opportunities and, indeed, suggests comparison of its statements with the results of human investigation. Men may thus be the more assured that in so far as they are able to test and prove the accuracy of Bible statements in this way they may be the better prepared to believe the Bible in matters where it cannot be directly put to the proof. If in earthly things it can be demonstrated to be accurate, men may be more ready to trust its accuracy in regard to heavenly things.

Two further observations may be made. First, it is a matter of history that human theories have often been in conflict with Bible statements of fact. It may still be so in the future. Repeatedly it has been found that further evidence has corroborated the biblical record. The second is that the Christian's understanding of the Bible may well be enlarged by a due taking into account of the discoveries of science.

In regard to the Bible, criticism (*i.e.*, the faculty by which we test, discern and apprehend truth) has five distinct spheres of operation: (1) *Palæography*—the study of ancient documents and writing. (2) *Textual Criticism*—the endeavour to discover the exact words employed by the human writers. (3) *Grammatical Criticism*—the endeavour to discover the meaning of what is written. (4) *Literary Criticism*—the endeavour to evaluate the style, authorship, age, and general relations between the writings. (5) *Historical Criticism*—the endeavour to discover how far the records give accurate accounts of what really took place and to relate them with other historical sources.

There is also, for the Christian, a sixth form of criticism, which we may term "spiritual" or "practical." The latter (under the guidance of the Holy Spirit) endeavours to answer the question, "What does the Book, or paragraph or verse mean for me?"

For the Christian, the authority of the Bible rests primarily on Christ's own attitude and promises, upon its own claims, and upon the inward witness of the Spirit to its being the very Word of God to the soul. Our Lord called the Old Testament the *Word of God* (Mark vii. 13), declared that the Scripture must be fulfilled and cannot be broken (Matt. v. 18, John x. 35); and after His Resurrection expounded to two disciples "in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself" (Luke xxiv. 27).

To accept the Divine Authority of Scripture is in no sense "bibliolatry"—worship is rendered to God alone. Jesus Christ is the supreme revelation of God in the flesh; Holy Scripture is revered as the Word of God and "the testimony of Jesus," whereby His salvation is revealed to all generations.

Study carefully : 2 Tim. iii. 16 ; 2 Pet. i. 20, 21.

(See also the Scriptures suggested by the compilers of the Westminster Confession in Appendix A, p. 28).

See Bibliography, Appendix B, p. 34.

II. The Trinity

Clause (b): "The unity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit in the Godhead."

It is difficult to express in human language the revealed facts concerning the Godhead. The disciples

were Jews and therefore strict monotheists. Yet they were compelled after sojourning with Jesus for three and a half years to say also that He was God. Further, the Lord Jesus Himself, before He ascended, promised He would send to them another Comforter, even "the Spirit of Truth." This comprises a revelation, therefore, of a Triunity in the Godhead.

Further investigation shows that this revelation is not inconsistent with the monotheism of the Old Testament. Scripturally and philosophically there cannot be more than one true God. But that is not the same thing as saying that there cannot be real distinctions in the Godhead. Not only did the disciples assert that Jesus was God, but Christ Himself proclaimed His oneness with God, and God proclaimed Him as His only-begotten Son. The Christian today reaffirms that fact. The Christian accepts the Old Testament revelation, but sees a deeper meaning in it when he realises the fact that the New Testament joins Father, Son and Holy Spirit in the Unity of the Godhead.

Hence, we believe both in the Unity of God, and also hold the essential difference of the three Persons, together with their essential unity in the Godhead. The Father is not the Son. The Son is not the Holy Spirit. But the Father, Son and Spirit are equally God, one in substance or essence.

Study carefully (for the Unity of God) : Exodus, Deuteronomy, and the Divine Names elsewhere throughout the Old Testament.

(For the Trinity) : Matt. xxviii. 19 ; John xiv. 16 ; 2 Cor. xiii. 14 ; Eph. ii. 18 ; Rev. i. 4, 5.

See Bibliography, Appendix B, p. 34.

III. The Fall of Man

Clause (c): "The universal sinfulness and guilt of human nature since the Fall, rendering man subject to God's wrath and condemnation."

(i.) "THE FALL."

We believe that the narrative of the Fall is historically true, even though the truth may be presented to some extent in figurative language. It represents for us an actual deliberate act of transgression by which man lost the favour of God. It is not a mere picture in the sense of general human wrongdoing. It is not scriptural to regard the Fall of man as a necessary incident, marking an upward movement in moral consciousness. Any theory of evolution which suggests that there is a gradual advance in moral sense, without deterioration of the moral nature, is not only contrary to Scripture, but is destitute of any proof in nature, and cannot explain the universal sense of blameworthiness.

We hold that by an act of deliberate choice man became estranged from God and lost his sense of fellowship with his Creator. As a result of this original transgression the whole of the human race, because proceeding from a common ancestor, is morally disorganised and incapable in itself of reverting to the original condition of moral and spiritual harmony with God.

But man is still a moral being, and he possesses the capacity of estimating actions according to a standard of right and wrong. He recognises the obligation to goodness even when he feels himself incapable of realising it in practice.

The appeal of the Gospel, brought home to the heart by the Holy Spirit, is alone capable of effecting man's deliverance from the blindness of his evil nature.

We believe that salvation means ultimately, and essentially, the readjustment of sinful man to the righteousness of God.

(ii.) "GUILT."

God's will, as regards man, is necessarily expressed in terms of law. This necessity arises from the fundamental relation between God and man. God's law is continuous in its demands. Those demands are not arbitrary, but exhibit God's eternal righteousness in the form of His requirements from man. The authority of the Law-giver is concentrated in each precept. Man sinned through obeying the promptings of his as yet unfallen nature in opposition to a revealed prohibition.

When man had transgressed, his successors continued to disobey, partly owing to the bias imparted to their nature by the fact that they are descendants of a sinful ancestor, and partly also by their own personal choice. Whenever a man transgresses a plainly stated law of God, he becomes by that act a law breaker. His condemnation is contemporaneous with his transgression. His condition is then instantly, and continuously, one of guilt. His guiltiness is (from the moment of disobedience) a permanent element in his relation to God.

(iii.) "GOD'S WRATH AND CONDEMNATION."

By "God's wrath" must be understood what has been termed "God's judicial displeasure against sin." Wrath, in this sense, is as permanent an element in

the Divine nature as love. It is the reaction of holiness to unrighteousness. Because God is essentially righteous, fallen man must be the object of His just condemnation.

Study carefully: for section (i.) Gen iii.; Rom. i. 18, iii. 20, v. 12-21; and also Gen. i. 27, v. 1, ix. 6; 1 Cor. xi. 7; Col. iii. 10. For sections (ii.) and (iii.) Rom. i.-iii.

See Bibliography, Appendix B, p. 34.

IV. Redemption

Clause (d): "Redemption from the guilt, penalty and power of sin only through the sacrificial death (as our Representative and Substitute) of Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Son of God."

(i.) CHRIST'S "SACRIFICIAL DEATH."

Three main interpretations of the death of Christ have been suggested.

- (1) That Christ died as our *Example*;
- (2) That He died as our *Representative*; and
- (3) That He died as our *Substitute*.

We believe that there are elements of truth in each of these theories, but that no explanation of the Cross of Christ can be satisfactory which omits the idea of substitution. It seems plain from the Gospels that both our Lord and His disciples looked upon His death in this light. "The Son of Man has come to give His life a ransom for many." "This is My blood of the new testament which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Matt. xx. 28 and Luke xxvi. 28).

(ii.) "REPRESENTATIVE."

If the word "Representative" be employed as affording relief from some assumed difficulty in the substitutionary theory, it becomes unsatisfactory because of its indefiniteness. A "representative" may be confined to narrow limits or may be permitted to exercise the powers of a plenipotentiary. In the latter case he is, for all practical purposes, a substitute. The term "Representative" would also be unsatisfactory because for one person to be a representative of another usually implies some choice by the person so represented. But our Lord Jesus Christ was not freely chosen by men as their Representative, but definitely rejected. On the other hand, the New Testament refers to our Lord as "the last Adam," "the second man, the Lord from heaven" (1 Cor. xv. 45, 47) and in this sense he may be spoken of as the representative man.

(iii.) "SUBSTITUTE."

The use in the New Testament of Old Testament sacrificial terms, together with such expressions as "ransom," "bearing our sins," "the just for the unjust," "propitiation," "made sin for us," indicate a close and necessary relation between the Saviour's death and the sinful objects of His redeeming love.

While it is clearly stated that our Lord is an Example, the language of the Bible expresses a closer relation than a simple "exemplary" one. We believe that a careful collation of New Testament passages referring to the death of Christ compels belief in an objective vicarious

sacrifice, which is adequately expressed only by the word "Substitution."

The doctrine of Substitution does not raise any question of equivalence of punishment. But it emphasises the fact that our Lord Jesus has exhausted the consequences of our sin in His Own Person. (See Isa. liii. 4-6 and 1 Pet. i. 19 and ii. 24.)

The Scriptures emphasise the *quality* of the Sinless Substitute. This is a consideration which far outweighs any quantitative equivalence, if indeed the latter were possible.

(iv.) "ONLY."

When it is stated that redemption is secured *only* through the Sacrificial Death of our Lord Jesus Christ, we must be understood to mean that the "grace of renewal" (*i.e.*, of sanctification), as well as of justification, comes to us because of the propitiation made on our behalf by Jesus Christ our Lord. The holiness wrought in us by the Spirit of God is not itself a ground of acceptance with God. We cannot become holy unless we have first been "accepted in the Beloved."

The main truth to be grasped is that the Cross is the central fact of the New Testament; that the death of Christ is the heart of Christianity. It is noteworthy that it is His death, not His life or teaching, which He would have us perpetually to commemorate in His own ordinance of the Lord's Supper.

Study carefully: Heb. ix.; Matt. xx. 28; 2 Cor. v. 21; Gal. ii. 20; 1 Pet. iii. 18; Rom. v. 10; Phil.

ii. 8; Heb. ii. 9-14; 1 Cor. i. 23; Gal. vi. 12; Eph. ii. 16; Lev. xvi; Isa. liii. 4-6.

(v.) "THE INCARNATE SON OF GOD."

We believe that Jesus Christ is the Eternal Son of God, Who was conceived of the Holy Ghost and born of the Virgin Mary; that He was, and is, true and perfect Man and very God; two Natures in the indissoluble unity of one Personality.

No truth of revelation is of such importance as that which relates to the Person and work of Jesus Christ. Wrong views of His Person will mean wrong views about almost everything else. The New Testament makes it plain not only that we have a revelation of God, but that Christ is the revelation. "In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." The manner of His coming to this world was supernatural; His life in it was supernatural; and His departure from it was supernatural. The miraculous conception and virgin birth of Jesus, His sinlessness, and His miraculous exit are plainly recorded facts. Authentic witness is borne to them all.

Study carefully: Matt. i.; Luke ii.; Heb. i.-ii.; Eph. i. 19-23; Phil. ii. 5-11; Col. i. 15-19; and John's Gospel.

See Bibliography, Appendix B, p. 34.

V. The Resurrection

Clause (e): "*The Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.*"

We believe in the resurrection of the crucified body of our Lord, in His ascension into heaven, and in His

present ministry there for all believers as High Priest and Advocate.

In discussing this subject, students would be well advised to observe the reserve which Holy Scripture maintains when describing the form of our Lord's resurrection Body and to note such warnings as those given in 1 Cor. xv. 35 and the following verses.

No event in history is better authenticated than the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. This resurrection was bodily and not spiritual; the body which was buried was raised, but in a transfigured form. There was both identity and dissimilarity. The resurrection body was transformed and adapted to new spiritual conditions, but the changes that occurred in it were conditional upon the redemption of the natural body that lay in the grave. If the evidence of the New Testament is to be accepted, the fact of the resurrection and the objective reality of the Resurrection Body must not be separated.

Study carefully: the evidence given in the Gospel, and Acts; and Phil. iii. 20-21; 1 Cor. xv. 43-49.

See Bibliography, Appendix B, p. 34.

VI. Regeneration

Clause (f): "The necessity of the work of the Holy Spirit to make the Death of Christ effective to the individual sinner, granting him repentance toward God and faith in Jesus Christ."

The first movement in the heart of a sinner comes from the Holy Spirit. The call of God is normally

mediated through the Holy Scriptures (read or preached), and the Holy Spirit awakens "conviction of sin," "repentance unto life," and "saving faith" in our Lord Jesus Christ. In this manner the soul is "born again to a living hope" through the Gospel.

Regeneration is the operation of God the Holy Ghost in man, creating conviction of sin and such attitude of the soul towards God as leads to confiding trust in the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour. A man becomes a Christian by receiving Jesus Christ (John i. 12). It is the work of the Holy Spirit to lead any individual, in "saving faith," to such a reception of Christ. When a man thus receives Him, he becomes God's child in the full sense of the term. He has been "born again" (John iii. 3). This regeneration does not result from self-effort ("the will of the flesh") (John i. 13), or from the operation of any sacrament ("the will of man"). But such a reception of Jesus Christ is scripturally expressed by phrases such as "believing on His name."

Study carefully: Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27; John iii.; Titus iii. 5; 2 Cor. v. 17.

See Bibliography, Appendix B, p. 34.

VII. The Holy Spirit

Clause (g): "The indwelling and work of the Holy Spirit in the Believer."

We believe in the renewing and sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit (Titus iii. 5) and in His indwelling and infilling of the believer (John xiv. 16, 17, 26, and xvi. 7-15).

As we have already seen, the Scriptures state that the

Holy Spirit is responsible for the work of regeneration. But there are numerous other functions of the Holy Spirit recorded, and all such references deserve the most careful and prayerful consideration. For example, the Holy Spirit abides in the individual Christian, making him "partaker of the Divine nature" (2 Pet. i. 4). This Divine nature expresses itself in a growing likeness to the Lord Jesus Christ, "the fruit of the Spirit" (Gal. v. 22, 23). The Holy Spirit thus perfects Christian character. He also acts as the Interpreter of Scripture (John xvi. 13) and equips for Christian service (Acts i. 8).

The Third Person of the Trinity occupies a far more vital place in God's provision for the individual and the Church than the majority of Christian students appear to realise. We would strongly advise a careful study of what the Scriptures have to say concerning the relations of the Holy Spirit to: (1) The Godhead; (2) the Church; (3) the individual Christian; and (4) the Scriptures.

The distinction between the sanctification of the individual who receives Christ, and his justification, will be made clearer by the following summary:

"The two are inseparable in fact, but they are distinguishable in thought, and must be kept quite clear if we desire peace and blessing. Justification concerns our standing; Sanctification our state. The former affects our position (before God); the latter our condition. The first deals with relationship (to God); the second with fellowship (with God). Even though they are bestowed together we must never confuse them. The one is the foundation of peace, 'Christ for us';

the other is the foundation of purity, 'Christ in us.' The one deals with acceptance (with God); the other with attainment. Sanctification admits of degrees—we may be more or less sanctified; Justification has no degrees, but is complete, perfect, and eternal. 'Justified from all things.' Our Lord indicated this distinction (John xiii. 10) when He said, 'He that has been bathed (Justification) needeth not, save to wash his feet (Sanctification)'" (Dr. Griffith Thomas).

Study carefully such Scriptures as: 1 Cor. iii. 16; compare Rom. xii. 2; 2 Cor. v. 17; 2 Pet. i. 4; Gal. v. 16, 25; Rom. xv. 13; Acts i. 8.

See Bibliography, Appendix B, p. 34.

VIII. The Return of Christ

Clause (h): "The expectation of the Personal return of the Lord Jesus Christ."

We believe that the Scriptures clearly reveal that our Lord Jesus will return in a manner similar to that of the Ascension. While the details of this future event are subject to different interpretations as to its form and its order of events, the promise of a future personal return is assured by Scripture. It is as indubitable as the fact of the first coming, and is the subject of a considerable number of references in both the Old and New Testaments.

Study carefully: Mark xiv. 62; John xiv. 3; Acts i. 11; 1 Thess. iv. 13-18; 2 Thess. i. 7-10; Mark xiii. 32; Luke xvii. 23-24.

See Bibliography, Appendix B, p. 34.

SOME FURTHER OBSERVATIONS

A perusal of the foregoing outline from the point of view of Systematic Theology may reveal that reference has not been made to some subjects of immediate interest to the reader. Many omissions are intentional on the part of the compilers, who have endeavoured to keep before them the limitations imposed by the aim of this booklet. Numerous matters (which are otherwise important) have received no consideration because there is no mention of them in the clauses of the Doctrinal Basis. For these the authors would refer the reader to the books for further study listed on page 34, especially the general text-books.

But there would seem to be reasons why no doubt ought to be left concerning the three matters concerning which those who hold the Evangelical position have not infrequently been criticised :

1. *Final Authority*.—The leaders of the Inter-Varsity Fellowship desire to maintain the Evangelical Protestant faith as represented by the chief English and Scottish Reformers and their successors in subsequent Church History. It is necessary to deny the baseless assertion that by such a position a superior value is attached to the written record than to the Head of the Church Himself. We desire to be under complete obedience to Christ, but we claim that we can only know His mind with certainty through the Sacred Scriptures, mediated by the Holy Spirit.

2. *Righteous Living*.—Those who oppose the doctrine that the sole ground of man's justification before God

is the Redemptive Work of our Lord Jesus Christ usually assert that it leads to a lessening of moral effort and righteous living. Therefore, we desire to state that we recognise the obligation resting on all men to fulfil the law of God. "Good works" are no mere appendage to the Christian life, but are required of man as God's creature. The evil nature of man, however, fails of, and even wars against, the righteousness to which we are obliged. Yet God the Holy Spirit not only awakens us to a sense of need, granting us repentance and faith, but He continues to operate in our lives to bring us into conformity with Christ Jesus our Lord.

3. *Relation to the Protestant Churches*.—The Fellowship earnestly disclaims the notion that it is a Church or Sect. Its leaders regard it as a training ground and recognise the duty of every member to belong to an organised community in the Visible Church of God.

It has been a valuable feature of the work from the beginning that the *Doctrinal Basis* has been signed in all sincerity by individual members of many different denominations of the Christian Church and that denominational differences have not been allowed to weaken the united witness. It is most important that this state of affairs should continue.

All officers and members are urged to discourage any attempts within the Unions to proselytise for one denomination, and to refrain from criticism or disparagement of the views of other members. United opposition to fundamental error will be all the stronger if we are free to differ about non-essentials. At the

same time members of Evangelical Unions who have not already done so should enter into full communion with some branch of the Christian Church and be regular in their attendance at its services and ordinances.

It is usually unwise to consider a change from one denomination to another until the conclusion of the University course, when more careful consideration can be given to this step, and guidance patiently sought from God and from experienced friends.

Finally, let us ever remember that summaries such as the clauses of a Doctrinal Basis are fingerposts, and are not the road. Spirituality does not consist in the intellectual grasp of truth, but in obedience to the known will of God.

APPENDIX A

REFERENCES TO SCRIPTURE IN SOME PROTESTANT CONFESSIONS OF FAITH

There are valuable statements concerning the nature and use in the Church of the Holy Scriptures, as also of the other main Christian doctrines, in the great Confessions of Faith drawn up during the period of the Protestant Reformations. On the Continent the chief of these were the Augsburg Confession (Lutheran, 1530), the Heidelberg Confession (Reformed, 1563), and the Second Helvetic Confession (Reformed, 1564). The counterpart of these in the British Isles are the Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion of the Church of

England (1571) and the Westminster Confession of Faith of the Presbyterian Churches (1647). There follow extracts from the sections in the British Confessions, which refer to Holy Scripture.

(i.) THE THIRTY-NINE ARTICLES.

Article VI. "Of the Sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures for Salvation."

"Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation: so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of Faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation. . . ."

Article XX. "Of the Authority of the Church."

" . . . And yet it is not lawful for the Church to ordain anything that is contrary to God's Word written, neither may it so expound one place of Scripture, that it be repugnant to another. Wherefore, although the Church be a witness and a keeper of holy Writ, yet, as it ought not to decree anything against the same, so besides the same ought it not to enforce any thing to be believed for necessity of Salvation."

[These Articles will be found appended to the Book of Common Prayer. There are additional references to Scripture in Articles 7, 8, 17, 18, 19, 21, 22, 24, 26, 28, 34, 37, 39.]

(ii.) THE WESTMINSTER CONFESSION.

Chapter I. Of the Holy Scripture.

"Although the light of nature, and the works of creation and providence, do so far manifest the goodness, wisdom and power of God, as to leave men inexcusable;¹ yet they are not sufficient to give that knowledge of God, and of his will, which is necessary unto salvation:² therefore it pleased the Lord, at sundry times, and in divers manners, to reveal himself, and to declare that his will unto his church:³ and afterwards, for the better preserving and propagating of the truth, and for the more sure establishment and comfort of the Church against the corruption of the flesh, and the malice of Satan and of the world, to commit the same wholly unto writing:⁴ which maketh the holy scripture to be most necessary:⁵ those former ways of God's revealing his will unto his people being now ceased.⁶

II. Under the name of Holy Scripture, or the Word of God written, are now contained all the Books of the Old and New Testaments, all which are given by inspiration of God, to be the rule of faith and life.⁷

III. The Books commonly called Apocrypha, not being of divine inspiration, are no part of the canon

¹ Rom. ii. 14, 15; i. 19, 20. Ps. xix. 1, 2, 3. Rom. i. 32 with ii. 1. ² 1 Cor. i. 21; ii. 13, 14. ³ Heb. i. 1.

⁴ Prov. xxii. 19, 20, 21. Luke i. 3, 4. Rom. xv. 4. Matt. iv. 4, 7, 10. Isa. viii. 19, 20. ⁵ 2 Tim. iii. 15. 2 Pet. i. 19.

⁶ Heb. i. 1, 2.

⁷ Luke xvi. 29, 31. Eph. ii. 20. Rev. xxii. 18, 19. 2 Tim. iii. 16.

of the Scripture; and therefore are of no authority in the Church of God, nor to be any otherwise approved, or made use of, than other human writings.¹

IV. The authority of the holy scripture, for which it ought to be believed and obeyed, dependeth not upon the testimony of any man or church, but wholly upon God (who is truth itself), the author thereof; and therefore it is to be received, because it is the word of God.²

V. We may be moved and induced by the testimony of the Church to an high and reverend esteem of the holy scripture,³ and the heavenliness of the matter, the efficacy of the doctrine, the majesty of the style, the consent of all the parts, the scope of the whole (which is to give all glory to God), the full discovery it makes of the only way of man's salvation, the many other incomparable excellencies, and the entire perfection thereof, are arguments whereby it doth abundantly evidence itself to be the word of God; yet notwithstanding our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth, and divine authority thereof, is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit, bearing witness by and with the word in our hearts.⁴

VI. The whole counsel of God, concerning all things necessary for his own glory, man's salvation, faith, and life, is either expressly set down in scripture,

¹ Luke xxiv. 27, 44. Rom. iii. 2. 2 Pet. i. 21.

² 2 Pet. i. 19, 21. 2 Tim. iii. 16. 1 John v. 9. 1 Thess. ii. 13.

³ 1 Tim. iii. 15.

⁴ 1 John ii. 20, 27. John xvi. 13, 14. 1 Cor. ii. 10, 11, 12. Isa. lix. 21.

or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from scripture : unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit, or traditions of men.¹ Nevertheless, we acknowledge the inward illumination of the Spirit of God to be necessary for the saving understanding of such things as are revealed in the word :² and that there are some circumstances concerning the worship of God, and government of the Church, common to human actions and societies, which are to be ordered by the light of nature and Christian prudence, according to the general rules of the word, which are always to be observed.³

VII. All things in scripture are not alike plain in themselves, nor alike clear unto all :⁴ yet those things which are necessary to be known, believed, and observed, for salvation, are so clearly propounded and opened in some place of scripture or other, that not only the learned, but the unlearned, in a due use of the ordinary means, may attain unto a sufficient understanding of them.⁵

VIII. The Old Testament in Hebrew (which was the native language of the people of God of old), and the New Testament in Greek (which at the time of the writing of it was most generally known to the nations), being immediately inspired by God, and by his singular care and providence kept pure in all ages, are therefore

¹ 2 Tim. iii. 15, 16, 17. Gal. i. 8, 9. 2 Thess. ii. 2.

² John vi. 45. 1 Cor. ii. 9, 10, 11, 12.

³ 1 Cor. xi. 13, 14 ; xiv. 26, 40.

⁴ 2 Pet. iii. 16.

⁵ Ps. xcix. 105, 130.

authentic :¹ so as in all controversies of religion, the Church is finally to appeal unto them.² But because these original tongues are not known to all the people of God, who have right unto and interest in the scriptures, and are commanded, in the fear of God, to read and search them,³ therefore they are to be translated into the vulgar language of every nation unto which they come,⁴ that the word of God dwelling plentifully in all, they may worship him in an acceptable manner,⁵ and, through patience and comfort of the scriptures, may have hope.⁶

IX. The infallible rule of interpretation of scripture is the scripture itself : and therefore, when there is a question about the true and full sense of any scripture (which is not manifold, but one), it must be searched and known by other places that speak more clearly.⁷

X. The supreme Judge, by which all the controversies of religion are to be determined, and all decrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers, doctrines of men, and private spirits, are to be examined, and in whose sentence we are to rest, can be no other but the Holy Spirit speaking in the scripture."⁸

¹ Matt. v. 18.

² Isa. viii. 20. Acts xv. 15. John v. 39, 46.

³ John v. 39.

⁴ 1 Cor. xiv. 6, 9, 11, 12, 24, 27, 28.

⁵ Col. iii. 16.

⁶ Rom. xv. 4.

⁷ 2 Pet. i. 20, 21. Acts xv. 15, 16.

⁸ Matt. xxii. 29, 31. Eph. ii. 20 with Acts xxviii. 25.

APPENDIX B

BOOKS FOR STUDY

The following lists are not intended to be a complete bibliography, but to indicate a few of the books which should be read for a clear statement of Evangelical views on the respective doctrines which have been described in this booklet.

[A number of the books are now out of print. Students are reminded that there are a number of theological lending libraries, such as Dr. Williams' Library, Gordon Square, London, W.C. 1, from which three books at a time are lent free of charge to those who receive the necessary recommendations certifying that the applicant is a fit person to be entrusted with the books. In cases of difficulty, the I.V.F. Office will endeavour to assist officers of the Unions.]

I. GENERAL.

- Outlines of Christian Doctrine. Bishop Handley G. Moule. (Hodder and Stoughton.)
- In Understanding be Men. Canon T. C. Hammond. (Inter-Varsity Fellowship.)
- The Anchorage of Life. Prof. Daniel Lamont. (Inter-Varsity Fellowship.)
- The Catholic Faith. Dr. W. Griffith Thomas. (Longmans.)
- Perfect Freedom. A text-book of Christian Ethics. Canon T. C. Hammond. (Inter-Varsity Fellowship.)
- What the Bible Teaches. Dr. Torrey. (Nisbet.)
- Evangelicalism. Ed. the Rev. J. Russell Howden. (Thynne.)
- Why Believe? Prof. A. Rendle Short. (Inter-Varsity Fellowship.)

II. SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY.

1. *Church of England*:
An Introduction to Dogmatic Theology. A. E. Litton. (Church Book Room.)

The Principles of Theology. Dr. W. Griffith Thomas. (Longmans.)

2. *Congregational* :

Christian Doctrine. Dr. R. W. Dale.

3. *Presbyterian* :

Systematic Theology. (3 Vols.) C. H. Hodge. (Scribners.)
An Outline of Theology. A. A. Hodge. (Erdmans.)
Dogmatic Theology. (3 Vols.) W. G. T. Shedd. (T. and T. Clark.)

Reformed Dogmatics. L. Berkhof. (Erdmans.)

4. *Baptist* :

Systematic Theology. A. H. Strong. This is an excellent and exhaustive reference book, but owing to the small type is difficult for reading purposes.

III. HOLY SCRIPTURE.

Revelation and Inspiration. Dr. James Orr.

Revelation and Inspiration. Dr. B. B. Warfield. (Oxford University Press.) There are notes of this in a 6d. pamphlet, edited Rev. A. M. Stibbs. (Inter-Varsity Fellowship.)

The Unity of the Pentateuch. Rev. A. H. Finn. (Marshall, Morgan and Scott.)

The Building Up of the Old Testament. Canon R. B. Girdlestone. (Robert Scott.)

Modern Discovery and the Bible. Prof. A. Rendle Short. (Inter-Varsity Fellowship.)

Some Moral Difficulties of the Bible. Archdeacon H. E. Guillebaud. (Inter-Varsity Fellowship.)

IV. THE TRINITY.

The Christian View of God and the World. Dr. James Orr. (Elliot.)

The Arian Controversy. Prof. H. M. Gwatkin. (Longmans.)

The Knowledge of God. Prof. H. M. Gwatkin. (T. and T. Clark.)

V. THE FALL.

God's Image in Man. Dr. James Orr. (Hodder and Stoughton.)

Sin as a Problem of Today. Dr. James Orr. (Hodder and Stoughton.)

VI. THE PERSON OF CHRIST.

The Virgin Birth of Christ. Dr. James Orr. (Hodder and Stoughton.)

The Virgin Birth of Christ. Dr. Gresham Machen. (Marshall, Morgan and Scott.)

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The Fact of Christ. Dr. Carnegie Simpson. (Hodder and Stoughton.)

VII. THE WORK OF CHRIST.

Historic Theories of Atonement. Dr. Robert Mackintosh.

The Death of Christ. Dr. James Denney. (Hodder and Stoughton.)

The Atonement. Dr. R. W. Dale. (Hodder and Stoughton.)

The Gospel and its Ministry. Sir Robert Anderson. (Pickering and Inglis.)

Why the Cross? Archdeacon H. E. Guillebaud. (Inter-Varsity Fellowship.)

Atonement and Law. Dr. John M. Armour. (Moody Institute.)

VIII. THE RESURRECTION.

The Resurrection of Jesus. Dr. James Orr. (Hodder and Stoughton.)

The Glory and Joy of the Resurrection. Dr. E. Paton.

The Risen Master. H. Latham. (Camb. Univ. Press.)

IX. THE HOLY SPIRIT.

The Holy Spirit of God. Dr. W. Griffith Thomas.

The Giver and His Gifts. Dr. E. W. Bullinger.

The Holy Spirit. Dr. A. B. Simpson.

The Ministry of the Spirit. Dr. A. T. Gordon.

The Spirit of Christ. Andrew Murray. (Nisbet.)

X. THE RETURN OF CHRIST.

A Syllabus of New Testament Study. (See Section on Revelation.) A. T. Robertson. (Hodder and Stoughton.)

Ecce Venit. Dr. A. T. Gordon. (Thynne.)

The Revelation of St. John. Some Notes on its Interpretation.

The Rev. G. T. Manley. (Inter-Varsity Fellowship.)

XI. THE LAST THINGS.

The Christian Doctrine of Immortality. Dr. Salmond. (T. and T. Clark.)

Principles of Co-operation. Compiled by the Advisory Committee. Price 3d. By post, 4d. (Free to Officers of the Evangelical Unions.)

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